



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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INTERIM MEASURES FINALIZED FOR GULF OF MEXICO RED SNAPPER AND SHRIMP FISHERIES Small Entity Compliance Guide

NOAA Fisheries Service's final rule implementing interim measures in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper and shrimp fisheries will publish on April 2, 2007. These interim measures are intended to temporarily address overfishing of red snapper in 2007 while the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) develops additional, long-term measures to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock.

In summary, the interim measures will:

- Reduce the commercial red snapper minimum size limit from 15 inches to 13 inches total length (effective April 2, 2007);
- Establish a goal to reduce red snapper bycatch mortality in the shrimp fishery to 50 percent of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003 (effective May 2, 2007);
- Reduce the total allowable catch quota (TAC) of red snapper from 9.12 million pounds (mp) to 6.5 mp, resulting in a commercial red snapper quota of 3.315 mp and a recreational red snapper quota of 3.185 mp (effective May 2, 2007);
- Reduce the recreational red snapper bag limit from four fish to two fish per person per day (effective May 2, 2007); and
- Prohibit the captain and crew of for-hire vessels from retaining the recreational bag limit (effective May 2, 2007).

PLEASE NOTE: The recreational red snapper fishery will open at 12:01 a.m. on April 21, 2007, which is 11 days before the interim measures for the

recreational red snapper fishery take effect. Consequently, the red snapper bag limit will remain at four fish per person per day and will be available to the captain and crew of for-hire vessels for the first 11 days of the recreational fishing season. However, beginning at 12:01 a.m. on May 2, 2007, recreational fishermen will be limited to two red snapper per person per day and the captain and crew of for-hire vessels will be prohibited from retaining the red snapper bag limit.

The commercial red snapper fishery opened on January 1, 2007, under an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program, but received only 2.55 mp of the 3.315 mp commercial red snapper quota specified by these interim measures for the 2007 fishing year. NOAA Fisheries Service will issue the balance of the 2007 commercial red snapper quota to the commercial red snapper fishery after the 2007 TAC becomes effective on May 2, 2007, and no later than July 1, 2007. The final rule implementing the commercial red snapper IFQ program describes how the balance of the commercial red snapper quota will be allocated among IFQ participants. A copy of that rule can be obtained through the contact described above, or online at:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/ifqprogram.htm>

All interim measures implemented through this final rule will expire at 12:01 a.m. on September 30, 2007, unless extended on an interim basis for one additional 186-day period or replaced by measures implemented through another rule.

NOAA Fisheries Service prepared a Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) and a Final Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (FRFA) that augments the findings of the final rule's RIR. The FRFA is available from the Sustainable Fisheries Division of NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Written copies of the final rule implementing these interim measures also may be obtained from NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. Electronic copies of the final rule, once

published, may be obtained from the *Federal Register* Web site at:

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.

This Small Entity Compliance Guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. Any discrepancies between this document and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

For more information on Gulf of Mexico red snapper, log onto: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/> or call (727) 824-5305.

MANAGEMENT ACTION	CURRENT MEASURE (STATUS QUO)	NEW INTERIM MEASURE	
		EFFECTIVE APRIL 2, 2007	EFFECTIVE MAY 2, 2007
Reduce commercial red snapper minimum size limit	15" total length	13" total length	
Establish red snapper bycatch mortality reduction goal for shrimp fishery			50% of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003
Reduce red snapper total allowable catch	9.12 mp (4.65 mp commercial; 4.47 recreational)		6.5 mp (3.315 commercial/ 3.185 recreational)
Reduce recreational red snapper bag limit	4 fish/person/day (also applies to captain & crew of for-hire vessels)		2 fish/person/day (0 fish/person/day for captain & crew of for-hire vessels)

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